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Vuzix Blade test-drive: The return of the CES smart glasses

Alexa-connected smartglasses are here, minus the Alexa (at the moment). An early hands-on.

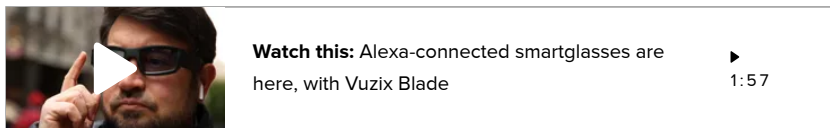
BY SCOTT STEIN | JANUARY 3, 2019 3:01 AM PST



The Vuzix Blade was promised back at CES 2018: The Alexa-connected smart glasses, which I demoed then, were like an updated Google Glass that promised a larger screen and assistant modes. The Vuzix Blade is now the first product I've gotten a chance to test in 2019. So far, what I've realized is that smart glasses are really here.

Whether or not they're useful is another story.

First of all, these \$999 glasses aren't really designed for you at all. Vuzix says the glasses are aimed at businesses, or those with impairments that might benefit from pop-up hands-free assistance. This has been the pitch with previous smart glasses and Google Glass-like devices, too, and Vuzix is already focused mainly on enterprise uses for these types of headgear, like the headset the company made with Toshiba that I briefly wore last year.



The Blade does, at least, look sort of like regular glasses.

I was wearing contacts when I slid on the thick black Vuzix Blade glasses, after charging them up and pairing them to my iPhone. They made me look like a cyberpunk dad, or maybe an art gallery owner.



Test-driving Vuzix Blade on my face before CES

16 PHOTOS

The Blade will work with prescription lenses, too, but I haven't been outfitted with lenses yet. These lenses will let the Blade work as a pair of functioning everyday prescription glasses, at an extra price (with prescription lenses, the total cost comes to around \$1200). The Blade kinda sorta works over my own glasses, but it's not designed to work well that way. I had to reposition where the display floats in my eyes, and also, I ended up looking even more ridiculous.

The glasses work as a phone accessory, like a smartwatch. I paired it to my iPhone and used Vuzix' phone app to set up the system and connect to Bluetooth and Wi-Fi. The Blade's Bluetooth connection was really buggy during early tests, dropping out a lot. Once connected, it can show notifications from my phone, use the Blade as a music playback remote, and take photos and videos. (Android phone owners can respond to

messages with quick replies.) The Blade has a little red LED that lights up to show when you're taking photos of people -- a much-appreciated attempt to stop Glasshole creepshots.

The Blade floats its single-eye display into the right lens using waveguides, which allows the glasses to stay compact. The area where the image is projected has a greenish-iridescent square etched into the lens, which is otherwise normally transparent. The visuals were larger than I expected and very crisp and clear. Text floats and is easily readable in normal light, and games and apps with graphics display clearly, too, but with some ghostly semitransparency that comes with the smart glass/AR headset territory.



Sarah Tew/CNET

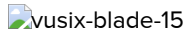
What can you do with these?

That's the question, isn't it? The answer for now: not all that much. The Vuzix Blade has apps, and a few preloaded games use the onboard gyroscope to work head-turning into a tank battle or dinosaur hunting. The Blade's head-turning sensitivity isn't perfectly synced, though, which started to make me nauseous.

A karaoke app with three preloaded songs encouraged me to sing along to The Girl from Ipanema, which was absurd. But besides being \$1,000 karaoke smart glasses, the easy-to-read heads-up display suggests other uses for assistance and closed captioning. Epson's smart glasses have already been put to use to add captioning for the deaf for theater productions. I could see the Vuzix Blade being a useful tool for similar purposes, if someplace had the budget. It also points to a future in which assistive smart glasses could be as easy to use as wearing a device that pairs like a smartwatch.

The Vuzix Blade is an Android device, running off a quad-core ARM processor. It has a 720p/8MP video camera/still camera, and

a microSD card slot for expandable storage. Technically, this is a potentially versatile little wearable computer.



It pairs with a phone, like a watch.

Sarah Tew/CNET

But the Blade needs to stay better synced, and be easier to use...and find a purpose through apps. Amazon's Alexa app, which I got to try for a few moments in an early build, shows search results and plays audio once I paired Bluetooth headphones (the Blade doesn't have in-headset speakers, or a headphone jack). Similar display-connected wearable assistant glasses could easily do the same in the future. Amazon has enabled wearables and headphones to hook into Alexa, and the Blade would be the first pair of Alexa glasses. Google Assistant support is also in the works, and both will function as apps that use the onboard noise-cancelling microphones. But the apps still aren't available for me to try on my prerelease pair, so stay tuned for deeper thoughts.

Still, the clear downside with the Blade is navigation. You need to tap and swipe the Blade's thick side arm, much like the old Google Glass. It works, but it gets tiring. These smart glasses haven't conquered easy control. Gyroscopic head-turning controls and voice commands could help, but they weren't always put to great use. And that alone, regardless of price and purpose, could be the Blade's biggest downfall. Still, the Blade doesn't even go on sale until late January, so these impressions are with early, prerelease software.

I'll update with more thoughts when final software is available.



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EXHIBIT H



Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Activist Investing10 messages

Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 5:01 AM

To: "rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com" <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Dear Rick:

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Jake Noone and I am currently a Law Clerk at the leading law firm in representing activist investors, Olshan Frome Wolosky LLP

To provide some background about myself, I graduated from Villanova Law last year and I decided to go straight into investment banking because I found it to be far more interesting than law. I somehow landed an off-cycle internship at Houlihan Lokey during my last semester of law school through cold-calling Villanova Law alum. I commuted back and forth from Villanova (outside of Philly) to New York every week for that semester. I worked in the M&A Group, focused on activism and activist defense. However, as you might know, the activist group took a significant hit with several key members leaving the firm. I waited around for quite some time to see if HL would rebuild the group, but things weren't moving very quickly and I began to doubt whether it would ever happen.

I accepted an offer from Olshan in February, partially because I knew that they represented the most activist investors on the street and partially because I was in a difficult position at HL. While things are going smoothly at Olshan, my instincts during law school seem to have been correct as I am not enjoying the legal side of activism as much as the investing side. Many people ask me why I even went to law school, and while there are numerous reasons, the one that trumps all is that it is a useful degree to have and the skills learned in law school cannot simply be taught elsewhere.

To make a long story short, I am looking to work for an activist fund and I thought I would reach out to you since you have been extremely influential in the space. I am not the best at selling myself, but I do think I can significantly contribute to your firm as I have been in the space for over a year and I have had exposure to many different roles. I can build white papers, create in-depth governance vulnerability analyses, screen for various targets, and help with business development.

My apologies for the lengthy note, but I always try to be sincere when reaching out to people. If you know of any opportunities or of anyone I could contact, I would greatly appreciate it.

I am free for a call or meeting at your convenience.

Thank you,
Jake

Rick Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 8:26 AM

To: Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>

Sure. Let's chat Friday after market closes.

Sent from my iPhone
[Quoted text hidden]

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 8:54 AM

Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>
To: Rick Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Sounds great. What is the best number to reach you?

From: Rick Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 11:26:53 AM
To: Jake Noone
Subject: Re: Activist Investing

[Quoted text hidden]

Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>
To: Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 10:56 AM

actually call me before the close. 11 am LA time.

my office # is [REDACTED]

what city are you in ?

[Quoted text hidden]

Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>
To: Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 10:58 AM

Today or Friday? I am in New York.

From: Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 1:56:49 PM
To: Jake Noone
Subject: Re: Activist Investing

actually call me before the close. 11 am LA time.

my office # is [REDACTED]

what city are you in ?

On Wed, May 31, 2017 at 8:54 AM, Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu> wrote:
Sounds great. What is the best number to reach you?

From: Rick Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 11:26:53 AM
To: Jake Noone
Subject: Re: Activist Investing

Sure. Let's chat Friday after market closes.

Sent from my iPhone

On May 31, 2017, at 5:01 AM, Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu> wrote:

Dear Rick:

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To provide some background about myself, I graduated from Villanova Law last year and I decided to go straight into investment banking because I found it to be far more interesting than law. I somehow landed an off-cycle internship at Houlihan Lokey during my last semester of law school through cold-calling Villanova Law alum. I commuted back and forth from Villanova (outside of Philly) to New York every week for that semester. I worked in the M&A Group, focused on activism and activist defense. However, as you might know, the activist group took a significant hit with several key members leaving the firm. I waited around for quite some time to see if HL would rebuild the group, but things weren't moving very quickly and I began to doubt whether it would ever happen.

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I am free for a call or meeting at your convenience.

Thank you,
Jake

Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>
To: Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 11:03 AM

are you free right now ?

[Quoted text hidden]

Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>
To: Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 11:03 AM

I am. I will give you a call.

From: Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 2:03:03 PM

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 11:05 AM

To: Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Just tried to call.

From: Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 2:03:03 PM

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 11:07 AM

To: Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>

really ?

weird

what is your number ?

[Quoted text hidden]

Jake Noone <jnoone1@law.villanova.edu>

Wed, May 31, 2017 at 11:07 AM

To: Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

917-628-4648

From: Richard Pearson <rick.pearson@pearsoninvestment.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 2:07:00 PM

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

EXHIBIT I

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

CEMTREX, INC.,

2:17-cv-01258-JS-AKT

Plaintiff,

v.

RICARDO ANTONIO PEARSON, a/k/a
RICHARD PEARSON and *JOHN DOES No. 1-10*,

Defendants.

NOTICE OF VOLUNTARY DISMISSAL PURSUANT TO F.R.C.P. 41(a)(1)(A)(i)

Plaintiff Centrex, Inc., by its counsel hereby voluntarily dismisses this action, without prejudice, pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(a)(1).

Despite making seven attempts, Centrex has been unable to serve defendant Ricardo Antonio Pearson, a/k/a Richard Pearson (“Pearson”), within the 90-day time limit set forth in Rule 4(m). Given the uncertainty of successful service and the significant expenditure of time and money additional attempts at service will involve, Centrex wishes to focus its resources on defending the related putative securities class action litigation resulting from Pearson’s false accusations. Centrex anticipates that it will prevail in the securities litigation, and reserves the right to re-file its claims against Pearson at that time.

Dated: New York, New York
June 5, 2017

OLSHAN FROME WOLOSKY LLP

By: 

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Attorneys for Plaintiff
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